[English]

Energy Policy

266. SHRI ANANT GUDHE : Will the Minister of POWER be pleased to state :

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news item appearing in the Financial Express dated 1.7.1997 under the caption "Energy policy panel for revamp of SEBs on commercial lines".

(b) if so, facts of the matter and the reaction of the Government thereto;

(c) whether the need for revamping of SEBs have been realised long back and steps initiated in this direction on the basis of experts recommendation without substantial outcome;

(d) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the details of difference between the new policy and package, to revamp the SEBs in a stipulated time scale ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF POWER (SHRI YOGINDER K. ALAGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The Energy Policy Committee (EPC) constituted by the Planning Commission has not yet given any recommendations in the matter.

(c) to (e) In the wake of growing unviability of SEBs, the Government has been constantly urging the States to take necessary steps to improve operational efficiency and rationalise tariffs. As a result of these efforts, while the capacity in the State Sector (including Private Sector) has gone up from 49291 MW in 1990-91 to 58808 MW in 1996-97, the PLF in the State Sector has improved from 51.3% in 1990-91 to 60.3% in 1996-97. The average tariff for sale of electricity by the SEBs which was 105.4 paise/ Kwh in the beginning of the Eighth Plan is estimated to be 144.4 paise/Kwh in 1995-96. Several States such as Orissa, Haryana, U.P., Rajasthan, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar etc. have also initiated measures during the last 2-3 years to restructure the State Electricity Boards and consider new regulatory mechanisms for the power sector.

Extension of Panchayats

267. SHRI GIRIDHAR GAMANG : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have asked the States having scheduled areas to enact the Law for extension of Panchayats after the enactment of the Central Act;

(b) if so, the gist of the guidelines issued to the States in this regards;

(c) the names of the States that have enacted the Law so far in the spirit of the Extension of Panchayat in Scheduled Areas (Amendment) Act; and

(d) the steps taken to expedite the implementation of the said Act to protect the interest of the Scheduled Tribes in Scheduled Areas ?

THE MINISTER OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (SHRI KINJARAPPU YERRANNAIDU) : (a) Yes, Sir. The States having scheduled areas have been requested to enact the law for extension of panchayats to the Scheduled Areas in consonance with the 'Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to the Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, within the time limit prescribed i.e. one year from 24th December, 1996.

(b) No guidelines have been issued to the States in this regard, but the State Governments have been urged to pass their legislation in conformity with the provisions of the Central Act.

(c) and (d) As per information available, the concerned States have initiated steps to extend PRIs to Scheduled Areas. These States have been requested to expedite passing the necessary legislation within the stipulated time limit.

Ship breaking Agreement with US

268. DR. M. JAGANNATH : Will the Minister of STEEL be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Government have granted approval to two US ships for ship breaking, off the coast of Gujarat;

(b) if so, the nature of objections made by the Environment Ministry; and

(c) the impact of ship breaking activity on the flora and fauna of the region ?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINISTER OF MINES (SHRI BIRENDRA PRASAD BAISHYA) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) A study on the impact of shipbreaking on environment recently conducted under the aegis of Ferrous